TRENDS IN EDUCATION

1977

1 Spring Issue

Gypsy Education

Using Libraries

Statistics

Classics in Comprehensive Schools

Department of Education and Science

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Trends in Education

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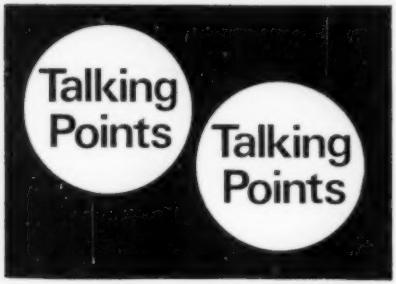

Gradus ad Parnassum

An educational policy based purely on the pleasure principle is a disastrous preparation for life. Some work (inside and outside schools) is of itself enjoyable; some can be made enjoyable by emphasizing secondary characteristics or by sharing it in good company; and some is not enjoyable but has to be undergone because there is no short cut and no machine capable of taking over. Most jobs include elements of all three: so do a great many leisure pursuits where endurance or the patient acquisition of skills is essential to good performance. Learning is hard work: it involves sacrifices, application, being criticized, being encouraged, becoming responsible and self-critical – if reasonable standards are ever to be achieved.

It is true that there are moments of illumination when a leap is made from one level of understanding to another. Not every step is hard, but illumination depends on climbing most of them. So if education is geared to giving a child the impression that life will proceed in an earthly paradise where all good things lie ready to be picked and are his by right, it is deceitful; he will have to acquire his garden and then cultivate it. He will need persistence, willpower, concentration, and the ability to postpone some satisfactions. His delighted discoveries must be consolidated into a firm grasp of techniques and concepts – a basis from which he can go on to make further discoveries, including the discovery that effort is rewarding.

This is not a plea for rote learning and over-practice of skills, but one for allowing pupils to realize the satisfactions of accomplishment based on their own efforts.

Covering up

After a time, newspapers and journals develop a curiously ambivalent relationship with their readers. What emerges in the end is something like the feeling members of a family have towards whoever does the cooking. If they don't like what's put in front of them, they complain; if they do, they say nothing.

TRENDS readers are no different. They may not say much, but when they do, we on the editorial side pay attention.

And what many of you have been saying over the last couple of years is that you didn't much like our cover. The historical theme (TRENDS 1975/1–4) seemed to please history specialists but few others – 'nineteenth century foxed' one irreverent bibliophile called them – and some individual designs attracted what might euphemistically be called 'selective approval'.

Well, then, to paraphrase the opening words of a long-standing BBC radio programme – happily, still with us – look at the cover; it's different today.

The Great Debate—what next?

The Prime Minister in his speech at Ruskin College last autumn raised some questions about education and suggested that they were proper subjects for discussion and for 'a rational debate based on the facts'. Within a few weeks of his speech, the DES was discussing arrangements for seven regional conferences in England (the Welsh Office arranged another for Wales) to be attended by representatives from a wide range of organizations directly or indirectly concerned with education. Some of these conferences have already taken place; a few are due to be held later this month.

Taking stock every so often is a valuable, even essential, exercise. There is a very good case to be made – and the Prime Minister made it – for taking stock now. But in a way the label ('the great debate') that has been attached to

this series of conferences has been unfortunate. It implies something quite unusual, an out-of-the-ordinary meeting of minds, a sale of the educational century. It would be a pity if, as a result, the conferences were to raise expectations they could not possibly satisfy.

There can hardly have been at any time in the history of mankind a subject more hotly debated than how we educate our children and ourselves. The regional conferences are merely performing the useful service of setting aside in eight separate places a day in which that permanent debate can be concentrated and continued. The debate itself will go on as it always has – and will.

Gypsy education

For one reason or another, a certain number of children between the ages of 5 and 16 do not attend school. Some are educated elsewhere – at home or in hospital, for example – but others, because of their special circumstances, may receive very little education. One of the largest of these groups is the children of parents who do not or cannot stay in one place sufficiently long to put their children in school. What provision can be made for these children, and what happens when they experience regular education for the first time?

The following articles have been written by people with a great deal of experience in the education of travellers. Don Buckland outlines what national policy is and has been; Jack Bateman explains what happened when he was suddenly confronted with a situation that demanded quick solutions; Stewart Males describes another approach — a mobile teaching unit.

Very many teachers have never had, and never will have, occasion to teach travellers, but Jack Bateman's experience shows that, in spite of the inevitable problems it raises, teaching travelling children offers its own particular satisfactions and rewards.

Trends 1977/1

The education of travelling children

D. G. BUCKLAND

HM Inspector with special responsibility for the education of travelling children

There are possibly between 15,000 and 20,000 gypsy children of school age leading a nomadic way of life in England and Wales. There are, however, no official estimates of their number nor of the number receiving full-time education. The 1965 Census identified 3,400 gypsy families in England and Wales but new counts, notably in the West Midlands, provide evidence that the present number may be 7,000 families or some 35,000 people These figures refer to the number of travellers who are still nomadic as opposed to those who have settled in houses over the years. In the West Midland conurbation and the surrounding counties, a count on three days in April 1974 suggested a figure in excess of 2,500 children of school age, of whom about 40 per cent were receiving some kind of schooling.

Estimated proportions receiving education nationally are as follows:

	Per cent
Pre-school	5–7
Primary	40
Secondary	10–12
Adult	1–2

It is important to relate these school attendance figures to the provision of sites or other legalized stopping places. By July 1976, local authorities had provided 130 sites with 2,064 pitches; twenty-five areas had been designated and twenty-six county boroughs exempted. So something like 70 per cent of travelling children may be on the roadside or on a piece of wasteland, moving from one unauthorized site to another, and many of them will reach school leaving age without ever having been urged or encouraged to attend school. About 60 per cent of gypsy parents appear to want their children to attend school and to learn to read and write, but with nomadism forced on them by the lack of sites, and with hostility and prejudice to combat, it is not surprising that so few have been able to make use of their right to education. It has been estimated that over 90 per cent of the gypsy population are illiterate. John Cripps* last year undertook a study for the Secretary of State for the Environment into the effectiveness of arrangements (under the Caravan Sites Act, 1968) to secure adequate accommodation for gypsies in England and Wales. The Department of Education and Science is among the interested parties from whom he has received evidence. He reported at the end of 1976.

The gypsy child and education

When the gypsy child first enters school he is faced with a foreign set of values and standards and an unfamiliar physical environment. An unhappy first taste of school may be enough to stop him ever coming again. Just as progress is being made with a particular child he may suddenly disappear, quite likely without a word. In some areas, particularly where there are official sites, playgroups have been set up which can be invaluable in introducing children gradually to school, though in many cases better liaison is needed between these groups and the school.

Problems arise with junior-aged children experiencing school for the first time. An increasingly evident academic backwardness can easily prevent them from joining in certain activities, and if not carefully handled, this can lead to their complete rejection of reading and writing. At the top of the junior school, even after several years of schooling, fresh problems can arise. Suddenly a pupil will seem to have outgrown the place physically and emotionally. Some children feel that they have made it when they have achieved a basic competence in reading and writing and see no point in learning anything else. Their attendance may become sporadic or their presence disruptive.

Even children with a number of years' experience in the primary

* Chairman of the Countryside Commission.

school find the transition to a secondary school extremely difficult and very few survive the full five-year course. Their interest can be sustained in some practical subjects, but a structured timetable prohibits advantage being taken of obvious areas of interest that could be starting points for broadening horizons. Travellers' children can be, and in many cases are, valued members of the school community. They bring into the classroom a refreshing and valuable new dimension uncluttered by the stereotyped ideals of much of the settled population, and they have a big contribution to make if the school is able to take advantage of it.

Language is one of the biggest difficulties. Travellers tend to run words together, mispronounce some and use their own words interspersed with English. Some of their phrases are archaic and they have a peculiar accent of their own – all of which combined can easily make simple statements unintelligible. Generally, the younger the children are the more easily they fit into school and the more likely they are to keep attending and to make satisfactory progress.

Fairground and circus children

Most fairground children are able to attend their own local schools from October to Easter as the pattern of their lives is very regular. Some schools have been receiving fairground children for many years. During the season, fairground families are on the move for most of the time and the children have little chance of attending school. The 'long-stay fairs' tend to be at Easter, Whitsun and in August when the schools are closed. During this period much educational ground is lost and it is not easily recovered when the children go back to school again in October. Where circuses are on tour for longer periods, or for most of the year, the children still attend school but perhaps for only one week at a time, and so in the course of a year may attend many different schools.

Local education authorities

There has been an encouraging response from local education authorities since the passing of the Caravan Sites Act in 1968. At least 100 teachers are known to have been appointed to work exclusively with groups of travelling children. In many areas, however, the response has been to have what is known as an 'open door' policy. Gypsy children attend local schools if they are presented by their parents and if there is room. Some remedial help may be provided. Many authorities appear to want to do more by making special arrangements for gypsy education but hesitate to do so for four reasons:

First, it is not easy to make a case for exceptional provision for any group of children unless they are identified as being in need of special educational treatment.

Second, there is often a lack of information about numbers, length of stay, and previous educational history of travelling children within an area. Without knowing the exact size of the problem, planning is

difficult. The gypsy style of life means that numbers and length of stay will never be absolutely certain but where there are official sites more accurate estimates can be made.

Third, internal difficulties sometimes arise when the education department is able to make provision but other local authority departments are not. Some authorities simply hope that travellers on unofficial sites will move on; others may fear that to provide schooling recognizes the presence of travellers and may encourage poor sites to become permanent.

Fourth, the times are not propitious for providing extensions to the service. Local authorities are naturally anxious to see the results of special provision. They want to know that additional funds are being well spent. To provide, for example, two teachers and a mobile classroom in October, only to find that there are no children left in April, may lead to expensive resources being under-used.

Special provision

Arrangements for making special educational provision for travelling children have to be flexible to match the variety of circums ances in which travelling families are living. The five main forms are:

normal allocation to classes with extra withdrawal groups, extra staff, and ancillary helpers;

an all-age special class or reception unit for travellers either based in a school or nearby, with a filtering system into normal classes when practical and desirable;

preparatory educational units on the residential sites to deal with family education;

mobile or visiting classrooms;

visiting educational staff linked with local schools or unattached.

The Government has assisted local authorities to support summer schools for gypsy children through the Home Office Urban Programme. They provide opportunities for children who already attend school to practise the skills they have partially learned already; to enjoy educational visits and family excursions; to experience the goodwill of the volunteers who organize the projects; and to share as much as possible of the project with their parents. They also provide for roadside families whose children have not attended school and for any children who have started school but left. While the total financial sum is quite small, the goodwill and encouragement that results is very great.

A regional scheme for the West Midlands Education Authorities is being financed under Phase 11 of the Urban Programme initially by a capital grant of £57,000 in the financial year 1975/76. Additionally, running costs estimated at £39,000 for 1975/76 and £66,000 for each of the next four years have been approved. The scheme provides

for mobile classrooms sited in areas of need, for specially trained teachers, and for a centralized system of educational records.

Almost all other local education authorities in England and Wales are known to have gypsy families living within their boundaries for at least part of the year. Examples of imaginative provision could be quoted from all parts, many having been started during the last three years. Somerset, for example, has two mobile classrooms which allow four teachers to visit gypsy camps with books, toys, playgroup equipment, and literacy materials. The aim is to provide family education and to ease the way for attendance at school.

Many worthwhile projects have sprung from voluntary initiatives. The West Midlands Travellers' School, for example, pre-dated the regional scheme and played a leading role in its initiation. It now supplements the school-age provision with a playgroup run entirely by gypsy mothers who have attended a playgroup leaders' course. It also undertakes adult literacy work supported by a grant from the Adult Literacy Resource Agency. The school has also pioneered a culture-based reading scheme for travelling children which has been a helpful addition to language materials in use throughout the country.

The training of teachers and volunteers

The Department of Education and Science has now financed four short courses on the education of gypsies and other children who lead nomadic lives. There has been a good response to these courses, and over 200 teachers and others have attended. Reports of the courses have been prepared for the benefit of the Department of Education and Science and course members. One-day courses and seminars have been arranged in various parts of the country by the national voluntary bodies and these have usually resulted in published reports.

National voluntary bodies

There are two main voluntary bodies for gypsy education: the National Gypsy Education Council (NGEC) and the Advisory Committee for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT). Each has an HMI observer. These bodies see their main task as one of persuasion where local authorities and national government are concerned. They have widened their interests in recent months to urge the provision of sites, health services, and a right to employment. ACERT has a full-time field officer whose salary is paid by a grant from the Voluntary Service Unit of the Home Office.

Regional groups have been established to urge special educational provision locally and these now exist in the north of England, the Midlands, the south and the south-east, the south-west, and south Wales and there is one covering the Inner London Education Authority. The National Gypsy Council and the Romany Guild are two other voluntary bodies also concerned with improving

conditions for the gypsy people. The provision of education for fairground people is the special interest of the Showman's Guild.

Both ACERT and NGEC have been given a grant by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency. Working parties have been established and programmes prepared aimed at bringing as much practical help as possible to adult gypsies. A necessary aspect of this work has been to recruit and train suitable volunteers. The Romany Guild has purchased a double-decker bus and equipped it as a mobile classroom so that teams can visit gypsy sites and start literacy schemes. Travellers are becoming aware from each other of this new facility and a genuine demand to learn to read and write is becoming evident. It is vitally important in any project for educationists to work closely with the travellers themselves. Resentment and mistrust can only be broken down by increased contact and by allowing travellers to participate in decision-making about the kind of provision necessary.

The future

The first priority is for greater coordination between the bodies responsible for making provision for travelling families. Travellers want education for their children but it is well down on their list of priorities. Other things like a place to stop, the need to earn a living, medical care for their children, and an end to harassment and eviction are all far more basic and important. All these matters must be discussed together by those who have a wide range of experience and contacts from within both central and local authority departments, and national and local voluntary bodies involved in work with travellers. Provision so far has been patchy with isolated developments in a few parts of the country, lacking coordination and, more important, hardly touching on the predicament of the majority of travellers. Recently, however, the Department of the Environment has arranged informal meetings between central government departments involved with travellers to discuss the problems and difficulties. Some progress has been made but a great deal needs to be done before the situation of travellers and their children can be regarded as at all satisfactory.

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Catch Twenty-Two Gypsies

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Notes on the Children of Travellers

Stewart Males. Unpublished paper, Herts CC.

Gypsy intake

JACK BATEMAN

Headmaster, Three Legged Cross County First School, Wimborne, Dorset

Although we had known for some time that a permanent gypsy site was to be established within the catchment area of our school and, accordingly, had planned for and given thought to such an eventuality, the manner and timing of their arrival caught us by surprise. We had never once contemplated having any gypsies within the school until the completion of the site. With hindsight, it is possible to see how mistaken we were.

It all began with a telephone call from the Area Education Officer in February 1975. According to his information, a group of three families were on a temporary site on the A31 at St. Leonards. They had presented themselves for admission to another school, stated their intention to settle, and were staking their claim to standings on the permanent site to be established at Mannington. The District Council were reluctant to move them on under the circumstances. 'So,' said the CEO, 'as they are eventually destined for your school, would it not be better to admit them now?' I agreed and was given a week to prepare.

Problems

I was under no illusions as to the scale of the problem. We are a small school; numbers on roll fluctuate between sixty-five and seventy-five, though there is a projected increase as development takes place in the area. There is also a small playgroup attached to the school. To take in a group of travelling children of mixed ages, mixed ability, and of alien culture and social behaviour would present many difficulties which I identified as:

1. the educational and social problems of the gypsy children themselves;

2. the need for close cooperation and the building of real relationships between the school and the gypsy parents;

3. the problem of integration within the school community;

4. the need to ensure the minimal impact on the educational and social opportunities for the village children;

5. the need to avoid any alienation between the school and the village parents (obviously the more successful we became with 4, the easier it would be to retain the good relationships we have enjoyed with our settled families);

6. the shortage of practical help from the Education Authority with staffing, space and equipment.

The existing staff of the school consisted of the head teacher, two assistant teachers, and a part-time teacher. I immediately requested that my part-time teacher become full-time (temporarily) until we knew the exact nature of the task before us. This request was granted. She was withdrawn from her normal duties in the school and was assigned to visit the camp site to establish contact with the gypsy families; to ascertain how many children were coming to the school and what their ages were; and to identify the educational and social needs of the children. The school welfare officer was involved in the operation at this early stage and the school transport officer was warned of the situation and of the need to arrange transport for the children.

The teacher reported that there were twenty-five children in the three families of whom twelve, between the ages of 5 and 11, would be attending our school. Two older children were at Ringwood Comprehensive School and eleven children were under school age. While this information was enlightening, it was at the same time somewhat daunting for the future. For the first time we had some indication of the number of children per family – and we knew there were to be twelve to fifteen families on the permanent site.

The teacher and welfare officer established close and friendly relationship with the gypsy mums. Dads were very difficult to see, usually leaving all contact and arrangements with the school to their women. I felt that all members of the teaching staff, including myself, should make themselves known to the gypsy families, for if we were to be successful, they must have confidence in all of us at the school. Although they wanted to settle and enjoy some of the benefits of *Gorgio* education, nevertheless they were very apprehensive about it as a result of many years of harassment. Now, willy-nilly, through economic and social pressures, their traditional way of life was becoming more difficult to sustain and they were very suspicious of the new. We knew that this suspicion would probably manifest itself by aggressive attitudes. It did. We are convinced, however, that our policy of establishing good relationships by frequent visits to the campsite has been absolutely vital. We let the gypsy families know from the beginning that they were welcome in our school.

The children

There were initially twelve children between the ages of 5 and 11. One girl aged 12, two girls aged 9, and two boys aged 7 joined us later giving a total of seventeen children. Another family of seven children presented themselves at the school a few weeks later but had to be turned away until the following September. For the moment we had reached saturation point.

As a group, the original twelve children were most interesting. The oldest boy and the nine-year-old girl had a smattering of reading and writing. Some of the children had attended school, though spasmodically and often with very long periods away. All were very keen to learn – though this, rather surprisingly, presented us with our greatest problem.

We decided to keep these children as a group. The social and educational engineering task could not be undertaken by their immediate integration into other groups. Had we been a bigger school, this might have been a possibility but we also had to consider the impact on the other children. We recommended that this special group should have an auxiliary welfare assistant as their problems would be very different from those of other special classes – and this proved to be the case.

These children want to learn and success must be immediate or the task is rejected. Although they want to learn, they don't know how to. The resulting frustration in turn led to quarrelling and aggressive behaviour among themselves and much initial destruction of school property and equipment. Surprisingly, the gypsy children were not hostile to the village children who, throughout, have been most tolerant of the newcomers.

The newcomers themselves provided additional problems to the school as a result of their former nomadic existence. The problem of the backward and slow-learning child we had already met. Culturally and socially the gypsy child's experience of life is very different from that of the settled child. His introduction to an alien society can prove quite an ordeal and we saw much evidence of this during the first few weeks. The gypsy children refused to join the other children in the playground but hung around the teachers during coffee-break and lunchtime. They continually sought and demanded attention and praise for a task accomplished, however poor it was. They fought among each other for the teacher's attention. If one child wanted to paint, they all had to paint. They fought over constructional toys and books. If the teacher showed an interest in one of them, the others would all immediately down tools and demand the same attention.

The classroom floor resembled the chaotic untidiness of the campsite. When a toy, a piece of equipment, a pencil, a crayon, or a book was finished with, it was dropped and forgotten. Social discipline combined with imaginative play and constructional manipulative toys were a priority before any academic learning could take place. All their play on the campsite, so imitative of father's occupation (scrap-dealing), was destructive. Our first priority purchase, therefore, was a wendy-house with dressing-up facilities. We learned a lot.

If children's play imitates the lives and activities of the grown-ups around them (though sometimes the mirror distorts), gypsy children are no exception. The role allocation in a gypsy society, the customs, the relationships between families and children, were all revealed to us through the gypsy children's play. The immediacy of their life and their lack of concern for the future, the strictly defined and different roles of the men and women within the community, the scavenging, sorting and discarding of anything without a cash value, the fighting and quarrelling among the men, and the peacemaking role of the women – all this came out in their wendy-house play.

There were other problems. On the gypsy site vans are for sleeping

in. All other activities, work, play, and often eating, take place out of doors. Inside is not the place for work or play. After an initial calm immediately on arrival at school, restlessness and claustrophobia developed in all of them – and outside they all went. In the beginning the teacher had no alternative but to go with them.

Observations

Before any 'academic' learning could begin, the process of socialization and understanding school society and its structure and values had to take place.

There is inevitably conflict between schooling and the gypsy way of life, a conflict not fully understood by the gypsies themselves. Their demand for *Gorgio* education is not directed to enable them to join the *Gorgio* society with all its restraints and restrictions; it is part of their basic philosophy of survival for themselves and for their families. Yet this very day-to-day existence, this lack of concern for the future, this carefree uninhibited disregard for many of the rules and disciplines of a settled society – in fact, their very way of life – is in direct conflict with the education they are seeking. Education, or the desire for it, is a commitment to the future. It is an investment which requires a structured approach (regular attendance at school – which in turn means a settled existence); it means long-term planning – in other words, if I do this now and regularly, the benefits will accrue sometime in the future. The fruits of education are not for immediate eating. This is at odds with the gypsies' own philosophy of day-to-day survival and was reflected in the frustrations, aggressive behaviour, and the discarding of anything which had served its immediate purpose.

In an attempt to capitalize on this gypsy philosophy, the teacher of the children in the unit asked for a Polaroid camera. An ordinary camera would not do. The delay between the taking of a picture and its developing and printing would cause more frustration and rejection. A Polaroid it had to be. Then, with the immediate impact of such pictures, she could try to achieve two objectives. The pictures of their caravans, their families, their school, and their friends, could be used to build up a scrapbook to stimulate their reading and writing. These scrapbooks could also be used to retain the gypsy children's interest in past events which was essential if she was to develop a corresponding interest in the future. The present was 'here and now', the past was 'look what we did yesterday', 'last week', and so on. The future was more problematical. It had to be taken slowly. Promises had to be made and kept.

The swimming pool, a great source of interest, could not be used until the beginning of May. Daily we were asked 'Can we swim?' Eventually the great day arrived and the gypsy children, along with the other children in the school, have used the pool every day since.

They were given a plot of ground, and after a visit to the local garden centre, seeds and bulbs were planted. Again the lesson – if we do something now, we have to look far ahead for results. Great excitement when the seeds germinated and the fierce pride with which

they defended their efforts did cause the occasional 'thump-up', if a stray foot (accidentally or otherwise) trespassed on their property.

We included them on the school outing. They took part in the planning and discussions (as indeed do all the children in the school). Patience wore a little thin but eventually the great day came. We went to Marwell Zoological Park. Their behaviour was exemplary. Wide-eyed and curious they bombarded their teacher with questions. It was a most successful day.

The new mobile classroom, which is to be theirs, has been a long time in coming. Nevertheless, it has been something to look forward to. When the contractors arrived to build the foundations, they were again able to identify with the past (planning) and the present (the realization of the plans).

The families

The need for close cooperation between the school and the gypsy parents was obvious from the beginning and we recognized that if it was to happen we had to take the initiative.

The teacher visits the camp at least once a week. I visit less frequently. We believe these visits to be absolutely essential. We were at first greeted with suspicion, as are all 'officials'. Now we are invited into the caravans for a 'cuppa'. Problems are discussed and we are expected to provide solutions. This we cannot always do, but no resentment is harboured if we fail.

The auxiliary welfare assistant visits once or twice a week. She watches and advises on all matters of the children's welfare, assists in form-filling and in claims for free meals or social security, and arranges visits to our school as well as to the middle school for parents of children who will be moving on. She has worked closely with the School Dental Service in setting up a dental hygiene programme for the gypsy children.

We took the earliest opportunity to invite the gypsy mothers to the school. Several mothers from the village also came along to tea and buns prepared by the gypsy girls. We approached the event with some trepidation but everything went swimmingly – thanks to the gypsy women themselves. They brought with them the most beautiful nine-month-old baby, and the effect was dramatic. The ice was broken.

Several mums from the village, with the help of a school manager who is the playgroup supervisor, are anxious to help in the formation of a playgroup for the pre-school gypsy children. They realize, however, that this project must wait until the permanent site is established and that it must involve the gypsy mothers right from the beginning. Since the tea party, the gypsy mums have been to the school to see their children swim; they have watched their children on Sports Day and have generally supported the school in its activities. We feel it to be a little early to invite them to the PTA meetings but there is a strong feeling among some village parents that this should not be too long delayed.

Relations with the village parents

We at the school were aware that our sympathetic admission of the gypsy children might not find a corresponding reaction among the village parents. So no announcement was made of their imminent arrival. Indeed, they had been in school a week before we had our first reaction.

I had decided to keep a low profile. I judged that if the parents objected, they would focus upon any possible adverse effect on the educational opportunities enjoyed by their own children at school. As long as their own children were not seen to suffer, any objection to this invasion of gypsy children would be slight and purely social. In the event, only one parent came to protest. Her chief complaint was that her children would be exposed to 'bad language'. (Since the gypsies have been in the school we have been taught no words which the village children did not already know and use. Village parents were somewhat surprised to discover this!) There was, however, much muttering in the village.

I determined that the village playgroup would not be moved from the school. I felt that much ill-will would be engendered if the facilities enjoyed by the village children had to be sacrificed to accommodate the gypsies. I needed the goodwill of the village parents if we were to succeed.

We got a full-time teacher. We were able to appoint an auxiliary welfare assistant. We were given an allowance for equipment for the new unit. We had the promise of a new classroom. With all this behind me, I decided it was now time to meet the village parents.

Until now I had avoided calling a PTA meeting. At first, I had considered this with the object of enlisting the support of the parents. I reasoned, however, that a PTA meeting could act as a catalyst for organized objection – and this I did not want. Now that decisions had been taken and I could justifiably claim that the presence of the gypsy children in the school would not seriously affect the social and educational facilities enjoyed by their own children, the time had come to call a meeting of village parents. I was in a position, I thought, to meet all objections. What an anticlimax! Only nine parents attended, and they were sympathetic to the gypsy intake.

The village children

The children of the village school were the group most immediately in contact with, and exposed to, the problems brought to the school by the coming of the gypsies.

Their first reaction was incredulity. This non-conformist, quarrelling group of children shocked them into wide-eyed bewilderment. Some explanation was obviously necessary to them and their amazement soon turned to tolerance. With the exception of one child, no attempt was made to capitalize on the situation. If anything, the opposite was true. The village children, consciously or otherwise, seemed to recognize the difficulties for the teachers and the school organization and they reacted with commendable helpfulness. They had much to contend with.

In all the books and publications I have read on gypsy education, everything seems to be written from the gypsy point of view: what method to use; whether to integrate from the beginning or to organize special groups; the effect on the gypsies of the school structure with its different priorities and values; the alien culture; and so on. I have nowhere seen a corresponding expression of sympathetic understanding for the impact an alien set of values and culture can have upon the settled children of the school. There was much to confuse them.

The lessons they had so painstakingly learned in their families, playgroups and infant classes – the lessons of sharing, respect for the other person, group play, taking one's turn, neatness, tidiness, application to work, values – all these seemed to be rejected with impunity by the gypsy children.

Organized games and the sharing of equipment became almost impossible when the gypsy children were about. Balls, bats, swings (any games equipment) were selfishly used and then discarded with no thought for their future use. The conflict between the gypsies' attitude of living for today with no thought for tomorrow and the social and conservation aims of the school and the settled community, caused much bewilderment among the village children. I do not think that even now they fully understand, but they seem to accept the position with admirable tolerance.

There are signs of friendships being established. The boys have struck up a kind of rough respect for each other but there are some problems with the older gypsy girls. They are two or three years older than the eldest girls in the school but physically and emotionally the gap is even greater. They have shown a precociously disturbing interest in two of the village boys in the school, a situation we have had to watch most carefully. This, however, is one of the problems we expected. It has been the unexpected ones which turned our quiet school into a place of unforeseen enthusiasms, despairs and absorbing fascination. That fascination began with the arrival of our first travellers and now that the dust is settling, the noise abating, it is above all, fascination which is the chief joy of having 'a gypsy intake'.

A mobile teaching unit for gypsy children

STEWART E. MALES
Teacher in charge, Hertfordshire Travelling School

Hertfordshire has over 200 gypsy families. About half of them are on permanent sites and the remainder are illegally encamped on the highway or at other unauthorized stopping places. Once a family has the relative security of a permanent stopping place, the local schools, particularly at the primary level, can begin to offer suitable educational provision. There are certainly problems, as there are with any minority group – and some which are specific to gypsies – but none of them is insurmountable. Schools, after all, are catering for immigrant children, slow learners, forces children, and many other groups with special needs. The one central and unique problem attached to teaching gypsy children not on authorized sites is their mobility. No other minority group is continually moving or being forced to move and it is rare to find children of roadside families in schools.The mobile unit was set up specifically to begin to reach these children of whom, it was estimated in 1975, there were 300 in the county.

Hertfordshire Education Authority, with the help of advice and a grant from the Advisory Committee for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT), began the scheme in the autumn of 1975 when my wife and I were appointed as teachers to run the unit. We had had three years' experience of living and teaching on one of the county's gypsy sites and had been resident wardens on another. We had the considerable advantage of knowing the majority of families in the county, if not personally, through relatives and their regular stopping places. The Save the Children Fund already had a mobile playgroup on the road and we sought their advice before choosing a suitable vehicle. Our criteria were manœuvrability, full headroom, space, and, of course, cost. We finally decided to purchase a second-hand transit-based Autohome motor caravan and to modify it ourselves.

We had the modifications completed and the vehicle equipped, and we were out on the road looking for our pupils by mid-January. The two months after Christmas are always the most depressing for roadside families. Work is scarce, days short, and mud abundant. However, most people are fairly static at this time so we took less than a week to fill our timetable.

We had decided to try three one-and-a-half hour sessions a day, allowing time for clearing up and travelling between each. Every group would be visited twice a week. It was obvious that there was a physical limit to the number we could accommodate at any one time in a space 10 ft by 6 ft, and rather than have to exclude people we decided to visit small groups if possible. In any case, the larger

concentrations of travellers tend to have more support from social services workers and are more static, so their children have a better chance of getting into local schools.

The venture was not initiated to provide an alternative style of schooling for gypsy children but to reach those who, through their mobility, previously had little chance of receiving any formal education. We saw our role as twofold: to provide an introduction to the pleasures and discipline of school for those children young enough to make the transition to local schools when their families remain static for a reasonable length of time; and to offer some basic skills to older children with no previous experience of schooling. We hoped that our visits would add a new dimension to the children's lives without encroaching upon the strengths of their own culture. We also hoped to cut through the barrier of prejudice that exists between gypsies and the settled population by being among the few outsiders who arrived at their stopping place to *give* them something.

The problems

The first step was to find our families. Hertfordshire is fortunate in having a small social services department which administers the county's sites and is also concerned with the roadside families. Regular surveys are made and the whereabouts of most families are known at any given time. The Save the Children Fund have a field worker and a mobile playgroup specifically for gypsy families and there are also voluntary gypsy support groups in certain areas, so it is largely a question of collating the available information and then going out to introduce ourselves. This is straightforward, provided we have a contact at a stopping place, otherwise there is inevitably initial mistrust and evasiveness.

Travelling people are accustomed to the attention of police, health inspectors, and a bewildering array of officials, and are experienced in giving vague and cautious responses. After a couple of such encounters we found it much more effective to find someone known to both sides to perform the introductions. Once the barriers are overcome we are welcomed without exception by all the people we visit.

Most problems are of a physical nature and concern, for example, timetabling a day's calls to be geographically convenient, or deciding whether to search for the family that moves away unexpectedly, or to find another group nearby to fill the gap. We had allowed thirty minutes between morning sessions but this, in fact, turned out to be rarely possible.

Some groups habitually 'go calling' as a family every morning, leaving only a teenager behind to clean up and mind the place. In these cases, a 9.30 am call would be pointless. Such families normally return by 3 pm so we have to visit then. Others are late risers because the children often stay up very late at night to watch TV and they compensate by sleeping-in the next morning. Having organized our timetable, we found ourselves in a continuous state of unstable equilibrium. Travellers move for many reasons, not least their desire for a change. For people who tend to live in an eternal now, the

decision is usually sudden and often we only find out that they have gone when we arrive for the next scheduled call. Time is inevitably wasted when this happens and when the family returns, we sometimes have no available sessions and are unable to visit them. To retain the flexibility essential to the smooth running of the project, we now keep two sessions a week free for administration, visiting schools, and accommodating returning families. To a certain extent, each new term requires a preliminary survey and re-plan of the timetable, and even at half-term we may need a couple of days to reorganize. We are currently trying stamped addressed cards so that families can let us know their whereabouts.

We work to a certain extent at odds with officialdom whose interest is primarily in removing gypsies from their patch on to someone else's. 'We can't move, Sir, the school is coming tomorrow' or even 'The teacher says we've got to stop here so as he can teach the childer' could soon replace 'The motor's broken down', or 'The wife's having a baby', as the most common excuse for not shifting.

There is also the continuing problem of communication between local authority departments, a situation not made any easier by our mobility. Finally there is the cleaning, which can be a major problem in winter. It is essential that we present the unit as an efficient, well-equipped, and well-run school, and that we aspire to the highest standards of the gypsies we visit. This is no easy task as many travelling people are spotless in their personal cleanliness and dress, and their trailers are often immaculate. In bad weather we scrub out at least once a day, often after each session, and the exterior (too big for the car-wash) has to be cleaned every week.

How the unit's work has evolved

The working space, although extremely cramped by normal school standards, can successfully accommodate up to twelve people and is extended outdoors during fine weather with folding tables, stools, and easels. Gypsy children are accustomed to the restricted space of their trailers and are generally careful and well behaved in that sort of environment. In the unit, as at home, they are always free to escape outdoors whenever they feel the need. Family groupings are easiest to manage, the wide differences in ages presenting no problems. Gypsy children are used to the non-competitive hierarchy of the family but find peer groups difficult to adjust to. We set no age limits and often have toddlers being looked after by older siblings. Less frequently, older teenagers and adults attend, but gypsy children in general make a rapid transition to a responsible, adult role in their early teens, without the lengthy uncommitted stage that house-dwelling teenagers experience. To gypsy teenagers, school is for children, and they have put away childish things.

The hour-and-a-half that we originally planned has proved a good length for sessions. The children's ability to concentrate is initially very limited and a variety of activities culminating in a story suits them well. Two visits per group per week, though by no means ideal, provides a workable routine and we manage to visit about fifty

children a week (maybe one-sixth of the roadside children in the county). Further dilution for a wider coverage would, we feel, greatly reduce the effectiveness and continuity of our work.

Many of those involved with travellers talk glibly about 'literacy' as being something magical and a basic need for these people's survival into the 1980s. The majority of gypsy adults actually survive extremely well without it and are not particularly concerned that their children should acquire such skills. If the idea that their children should be able to read does appeal to them, it may come low on their list of priorities. This is, of course, a generalization. Some parents genuinely wish their children to become literate; others positively avoid any schooling; but most, in our experience, are indifferent. School, if seen as a useful institution at all, is invariably seen as a place to learn to read and write. All other activities are considered to be a waste of time.

Families are pleased to see us and encourage their children to attend the unit. But we remain outside the gypsy culture and if we should stop calling there would be little comment. This then is the prevailing attitude. The children on the whole come from an environment where no value is placed on literacy, where books are practically unknown, and where no knowledge of the perseverance required to master literacy exists. Gypsy people are accustomed to acquiring the skills they need quickly. They expect instant results: 'When you've got a spare ten minutes, teach us to read'. Our work begins there.

Techniques

The children have coloured folders on which they write or type their names with whatever help is required. These are stored together and are brought out at the beginning of each session. The folders contain all their things, diaries, ABC books, workbooks, and drawings together with our record of their reading progress. If a child moves away, the folder is kept; it gives both a feeling of security and continuity to the child when he returns and provides an instant guide to us of his progress and attainment.

First visits are usually taken up with making pictures of motors, trailers, and various other familiar gypsy things from stencils we have prepared. This has proved a useful, simple, and relevant exercise. Presentable results can be obtained whatever the individual's abilities. It also creates a talking point in unfamiliar surroundings. We have learned never to assume that because a child has reached a particular age he will have acquired certain basic skills and knowledge. This may seem obvious but it took us some time to discover. Extremely wide variations occur between children with apparently similar backgrounds. Some sort of assessment is essential so that we can offer suitable material to each individual, and as soon as we feel the relationship is sufficiently developed, we use simple test cards (colour, shape, letters, and numbers) which together with close observation and a good deal of conversation give us a good idea of a child's needs. Close work and concentration are unfamiliar to most of the children and they find it very tiring: ten minutes is more than enough time

for each activity. We therefore provide as wide a variety as possible while structuring the sessions carefully to avoid the insecurity of a bewildering choice. We have the normal reception class equipment – sorting trays, jigsaws, construction toys, tea sets, games, a toy shop and money, together with lots of books prominently displayed, taped breakthrough books with headphones, a typewriter, and painting and drawing materials. We spend a great deal of time talking, discussing the contents of reference books, and reading stories. These are not startlingly new or different, but we always try to relate them to the children's own interests, and draw wherever possible on their considerable specialized knowledge of such things as types of motors, trailers, dogs, horses, chickens, wild life, china, metals, country-and-western music, TV westerns, and jewellery. We collect library books each week to extend the areas of interest that have emerged and generally try to promote their interest in the printed word. The children respond well to individual attention and considerable progress can be made in the limited time we have. Most are on the brink of literacy through exposure to TV, adverts, supermarket shelves, road signs, car numbers, and all the other places around us where the written word is emblazoned. Familiarity with capital letters always comes first and here the typewriter is invaluable in establishing the relationship between capital and lower case letters. Phonic work is complicated by the tendency for all travellers to have a peculiarly gypsy delivery on top of their local accent. It is difficult to describe and can make much of what is said unintelligible to outsiders. They also mispronounce words and use malapropisms and words from the Romany language in their everyday speech.

Numeracy is less of a problem as gypsy children are pretty shrewd where money is concerned although they still tend to think in pounds, shillings and pence. We concentrate on practical things like the toy shop, petrol consumption, weights, and prices of metals.

Few can tell the time as it has little relevance in their lives, but our regular visits at specific times help to create an interest in dates and times and we have a large clock in the unit which brings some meaning to the span of one-and-a-half hours.

While concentrating on literacy and numeracy, we are concerned largely with providing a stimulating and enjoyable new dimension in the children's lives. Their ideas of school are more likely to have been built up from TV comedies than from any first-hand experience, and from listening to their parents' memories of encounters with the 'school board man' rather than actually speaking to a teacher themselves. We have a considerable responsibility to try to modify these ideas both through our work with the children and by contact with their parents, an aspect of our visits that is becoming increasingly important.

In spite of the problems that a mobile unit poses, we feel after three terms that the project is at the very least a useful step towards reaching these previously ignored children, and that it could well prove to be a workable model which should be considered in the development of education for nomadic gypsy children.

School libraries: the way forward

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If school libraries are to survive in the present economic climate, librarians need to arrive at a much closer understanding of the educational process, put more effort into influencing the way in which resources are used in schools, and work more closely with educational advisers and specialists. This article considers these questions and examines how school librarians can integrate their services more closely with those provided by the public library services.

Teachers, no less than librarians, or for that matter all human beings, faced with a problem attempt to break it down into manageable proportions – they classify. Over the years, they have classified children by age, by ability, and by the subjects taught. Such a process of classification is immensely useful, but it is not without danger. It is easy to assume that if individuals possess a common characteristic which enables them to be classified into a group, that they are alike in all respects and that they require identical services, identical treatment and identical approaches. The fact that this may be true for the majority in a group tends to disguise the differences which exist within it.

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing realization that it is no longer sufficient to gear services to the majorities in groups. In part, this rethinking has resulted in the refining of classification schemes – the identification and grouping of slow learners, for example – but increasingly in the development of methods which allow individuals to receive separate treatment matched to their abilities and interests and particular stage of development.

Studies have tended to reinforce the belief that there is no one way to learn. Essentially education is the interaction of two individuals, the teacher and the child, and the nature of the interaction differs over time. Each learning situation is unique: each requires a different solution: or, to put it into more direct terms which reflect the significance of this truth for library services: 'Teaching becomes learning, classes become people, and people become individuals. Individuals need individual resources'.*

To select four implications of this statement for library services:

1. It is almost a truism by now that school library resource collections should include a wide range of materials in differing formats, but nowhere is the gap between theory and practice so wide. Too often schools have been content to assemble a few postcards in a drawer, a few pieces of hardware in a cupboard,

* From an unpublished paper by Ann-Marie Parker.

and to change the title of the person in charge and the label on the door. This failure to translate theory into practice, except in a few outstanding cases and authorities, is part of the greater failure of librarians to establish themselves within the educational system and to become an essential and vital part of it during the decade of prosperity. However, the thesis that the multi-media approach has an importance in its own right remains powerfully persuasive: '. . . if we can find other ways of expressing ourselves, it may be that we can at least enhance our perception and elucidate our ideas with different images . . . the most important benefit to be derived from audio-visual materials is that they provide in their use and in their production just such another way of expressing ourselves . . . Experience suggests that the librarian, resource officer, or producer should be primarily concerned to promote this process and help his enquirers place their need for information in a new context.'*

2. The collection should be organized for use, but for use by whom? A school library service should not be designed solely to serve teachers or children, it should be focused on the interaction between teacher and child. And in focusing on that interaction, we should guard against the dangers of over-organization. 'It is much to be regretted that schools in particular have been encouraged to develop very detailed cataloguing systems for their materials. Not only are they expensive to maintain, but they seem to neglect the enormous benefit children can derive from having to rephrase their questions more exactly. It gives them training in thinking and encourages them to look all round a problem, a discipline nominally recognized as important in some of the schools which install the most complicated systems.'†

3. The material in the collection should be selected to provide motivation and as a stimulus to the imagination in addition to providing an aid to instruction. Too often, to quote Chibnell out of context, 'we concentrate on filling gaps in the learner's information rather than on creating spaces in which he can develop his knowledge'.‡

4. The collection must be capable of being grouped to reflect changing interests and demands. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that the collection must be organized for use, but its implications are in fact much wider. It involves a recognition of the infinite variety of interests and demands and the need for the collection to encourage different approaches to learning.

Influencing the way in which resources are used

If it is accepted that library services in schools should be focused on the interaction between the teacher and the child, then it must also be accepted that the injection of organized materials affects the

* Chibnall, Bernard. *The Organization of Media.* Clive Bingley, pp. 19 and 21.
† Ibid, p. 63.
‡ Ibid, p. 12.

interaction and has an important part to play in it. Moreover, it is not only the content of the material which exerts an influence but its form and presentation, and this extends to the content and the form (i.e. organization) of the collection itself. 'We should think of a learning situation as containing different structures of knowledge, i.e. different associative patterns applying to the teacher, the student, and to the means by which they are brought into contact with each other – the communication system or medium.'* And the librarian? There is the rub. Almost invariably the librarian has been the absent friend at the feast – unheard, unrespected and, because he is absent, uninformed. In the past, librarians have been too timid in their approach, too uncertain of their expertise, too deferential, and too indulgent. They have aided and abetted teachers eager to dabble in the expertise of resource organization, but have been fearful of intervening in the learning process to which they have something to contribute – a knowledge of the materials and the way they are organized and used. If librarians intervene in confidence and from knowledge then, in my experience, teachers are as respectful of the librarian's expertise as librarians are of theirs, and will readily accept advice and help.

From the focusing of library services on the interaction between teacher, materials, and the learner stems:

a much greater involvement in teacher training, both initial and in-service. This involvement must, however, be of the right kind. The emphasis should be on the use of resources and should draw on the skill and the experience of librarians working in the field and, ideally, the training should be extended to all teachers rather than confined, as it so often is, to teachers with responsibility for the school library. This is not an easy aim to achieve but at a time when resources are scarce, gentle encouragement is justified by a deliberate channelling of resources to those schools which demonstrate that they are prepared to make the effort and can thus use them more effectively;

the greater use of the librarian in an innovatory role within the school, no longer waiting for teaching methods to change but actively seeking to bring about that change. This means two things:

(i) a recognition that all learning does not take place in the classroom. Those who have seen library resource centres around which the whole school revolves, will recognize that they can become complete learning laboratories;

(ii) an acknowledgement that the day when such centres, manned by staff with the necessary expertise, can be provided in each school is receding rather than drawing closer, even though the creation of such centres can in fact prove to be a more effective use of limited resources than the improvement or even the

* Ibid, p. 16.

retention of staff-student ratios. New methods of delivering the service must therefore be developed, such as the involvement of school library support service staff with the child in the classroom.

Working more closely together

Confidence in the importance of their contribution will not only bring librarians into a closer relationship with teachers, but also with their advisers and specialist staff. Without trying to develop this thesis in any depth, it can be illustrated by referring to a number of developments and their implication for resource provision:

individual learning, to which reference has already been made;

CSE project and O- and A-level work involving personal research and the need to provide well-organized library services geared to this requirement;

the raising of the school leaving age and the urgent need to introduce a more interesting range of activities and drive home the contribution which libraries can make in the final years of school and the opening stages of a career;

the Bullock Report and the central role which books and literature and other materials have to play in bringing together the different disciplines and making language the concern of all;

concern with the linkages between groups, between child and home, between primary and secondary school, and the part which books and libraries might play in providing the desired links;

teachers' centres and their possible involvement in a system for the delivery of resources to the classroom.

In each case, the implications for library services are great. To what extent were librarians involved in their development – not in reaction to them, but involved in them from the outset? How did the thinking of librarians help to shape them? Even more important, to what extent are librarians now involved, on an equal basis, with a consideration of the problems which these developments have thrown up? Though there are heartening examples, the answers can rarely be positive.

The integration of publicly supported services

The greater involvement with education, advocated earlier, need not involve crawling all the way out on the educational limb. Simultaneously, while strengthening links with education, librarians should be entrenching their position in the public library service and exploring new links with other publicly supported library services.

Some critics have argued that the close link between public library and school library services in the English county library authorities, and, until recently, the Scottish library authorities, has retarded the

development of school library services. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mistakes have been made, certainly: the nature of the development has sometimes been misguided, and, except in a few authorities, the development has been slower than one might wish. But a broad comparison between county and municipal authorities, always excepting the unique Inner London Education Authority, points to the value and importance of the link.

This view is reinforced by the advice given by the Department of Education and Science as to the range of services which might be provided and the need for closer working relationships,* and I myself have tried to show the opportunities which exist for securing the role of libraries in colleges of education by embedding them more firmly in a system of publicly supported libraries.† This is not the place to rehearse all the many arguments which can be advanced in support of this thesis, but the following few may be selected to illustrate the point.

The work of staff and pupils in the upper levels of the secondary schools is not dissimilar from that to be found in colleges of further education – indeed, some authorities have, of course, made their provision for sixth forms within the college sector. The range of stock required to support sixth-form work is very extensive – so much so that it is doubtful whether a separately organized school library service could possibly meet the demands likely to be placed on it without excessive expenditure. Moreover, such expenditure would result in a quite unacceptable duplication of stock already provided by the public library service and college libraries. It is important, therefore, to promote interdependence and flexibility of working between these three different sectors and to draw not only on their resources of materials, but also on their resources of expertise.

The sources to which teachers might turn for professional information and literature are many and varied. In one authority, for example, it was found that, in addition to small collections of professional material within schools, sources included: the Institute of Education, two colleges of education, teachers' centres, at least one college of further education which was providing in-service courses in education, and the public library service which not only provided relevant material as part of its general services but was also engaged in building up a professional library for teachers. Despite this plethora of provision, the delivery of service to the teacher, particularly the teacher in an isolated rural school, was poor. How much better to regard these separate collections as part of one system, to concentrate on a few, and to divert resources to developing a really effective awareness and delivery service.

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* *The Public Library Service: Reorganization and After*. HMSO, 1973; *Public Library Services in Mainly Rural Areas*. A report on present and future provision in Devon and Cornwall. DES, 1974.

† 'Library Services after the Amalgamation of New Authorities', Broome, E. M. In *Learning Resources in Teacher Education: Some Implications of the Reorganization of Higher Education*. Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education, Library Section, 1975.

In such a development, the public library service with its infrastructure of communication and service points is likely to have an important role to play. It was this fact, plus the public library service's facility for tapping a large variety of sources and co-ordinating supply, which resulted in a recommendation of one study by the DES Library Advisers* for the development of a system for the coordination of resource provision. It was recognized that in a network of this kind the teachers' centres and their wardens were likely to have a crucial role to play. Indeed, an attempt was made to show how different types of services could work within such a network, retaining their independence of operation and direct communication with schools, but by pooling expertise and facilities making significant contributions to efficiency.

The collection of skills common to all librarians is considerable. If this is used as a base and staff are given in-service training and guided experience in specialist aspects of the service, together with close specialist support, it becomes possible to utilize them much more flexibly. Flexible use does not just mean covering essential positions during times of holiday or illness, though this is not unimportant, but the *ad hoc* redeployment of staff from time to time to deal with a particular problem, or to make particular projects possible. The possibilities for developing the use of children's librarians and reference librarians in the school library service, or school librarians in the public library service, for example, are very great indeed.

An extension of this idea in relation to a single community is, of course, the concept of the dual-use library. Opportunities for providing dual-use libraries are likely to arise comparatively rarely, however, particularly when capital funds for development are in short supply. But if the buildings have to remain separate, the staff need not. In small communities, it is very difficult to justify the provision of a qualified librarian for the public library. It is often still more difficult to persuade education authorities that a librarian is required in the primary schools or even the secondary school. However, if for a moment institutional boundaries can be forgotten and thought given to the library requirements of the community as a whole, then it becomes much easier to justify the need for a librarian. The concept of the community librarian, touched on in a number of DES publications in the past five years, is certainly worth considering alongside other methods of staffing which have been developed recently, such as the team approach, with which, of course, it is not necessarily in conflict.

If the boundaries which have tended to grow up between services can be demolished, there is one further possibility which might be mentioned. It is not one which will be very popular. The public library service for children and the school library service complement one another – both are essential to the development of the child. However, it cannot be denied that in many smaller communities,

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* *Public Library Services in Mainly Rural Areas.* Op. cit.

particularly where public library facilities are inadequate, the pathetic provision often made for children pales into insignificance compared with the extensive stocks of the local schools. Use patterns tend to show that children recognize this. In times of economic difficulty, librarians should do so too. The closing of children's libraries and the channelling of resources to nearby school libraries (and in some communities the reverse might be more sensible) has implications for administrative and financial control (for example, the school library must be open during school holidays) but these difficulties should not stand in the way of making the most sensible use of limited funds to provide the best possible service for children.

Divisive forces

If this article has a central theme, it is the need to guard against the divisive forces inherent in the present economic situation. Faced with enforced reductions in expenditure, with staffing redundancies, with cut-backs in service, there is a tendency in us all to build our barriers higher and to retreat behind our defences. Instead of regarding consortia as a source of strength in a time of weakness, authorities, so we read, look to the financial contributions which they make to such consortia as the first candidates for reduction, and in the process of lopping and chopping, services provided on an agency basis are lopped and chopped first because it is their chaps who will be made redundant, not ours.

No graver mistake could be made. In adversity we should draw together, not fall apart. We should be looking for new ways of working together, new relationships to build, the development of new joint services, and the reinforcement of one another's special skills. This will require the deliberate sacrifice of some cherished services in the frank recognition that they can be better provided elsewhere, the loss of some control, the disbandment of some empires, and the promotion of interdependence and operational coordination. It will involve painful adjustments, but in the end the patient may emerge, not permanently maimed as some of the more strident voices would have us believe, but leaner, fitter, and stronger.

This is an edited version of an article, based on a talk given to the Weekend School of the Youth Libraries Group of the Library Association in October 1976.

Library resources and the teacher librarian: a guide for the inexperienced

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The development of the school library as a multi-media resource centre can broaden the range of educational experience offered by the school, as well as stimulate more economical use of existing resources and equipment. But what advice can be given to the inexperienced teacher-librarian, newly presented with this challenge?

To develop a school library as a resource centre is a harsh challenge in today's circumstances for the school librarian. Yet economic stringency can lead us in the same direction as educational innovation so that we find the library has a new role. The multitude of learning materials scattered around our schools may receive fuller use if organized into an integrated collection, together with the book library. When the existence and the whereabouts of every learning resource in the school is listed in a helpful manner, this may prevent double-buying and stimulate imaginative work because everything is easy to find. We may, as a result, increase the range of activities open to teachers and pupils, and the variety of learning experiences offered by the school.

This faces school librarians with a new challenge and additional burdens. Already they are charged with the task of collecting, organizing, and activating a traditional book library, and taking part in the very full programme so well spelt out in the Bullock Report, *A Language for Life*. Now they must turn their attention to unfamiliar materials such as charts and filmstrips, and discuss the needs of interdisciplinary studies and those departments employing one or other variant of resource-based learning.

This is difficult enough even for those few hundred schools with a full-time professional librarian. In most secondary schools, the library is run by a teacher, heavily committed to a teaching timetable, and with little training or experience in library resources work. Such people may take comfort from one thought: the task of the library resource centre may now be more complex, but it has not changed its nature, nor will the techniques of the teacher-librarian need to be drastically altered because the library has enlarged its scope.

The library resource centre as a system

Perhaps the most cogent advice that can be given to the young teacher new to the resources job is to avoid rushed decisions. Take a

long view and work towards an integrated policy. The temptation always, when working under pressure, is to adopt a fragmentary, piecemeal approach to everything, tackling 'easy' problems first ('Sort those colour supplements'). Of course, all teacher-librarians will have to settle for a series of limited objectives at the beginning, but to deal with them without reference to one's view of the system as a whole may lead to wasted time and later frustration. Apparently simple solutions are not always the wisest; indeed, it is a general rule that what is easiest for the librarian tends to be the most difficult for library users (pupils and teachers). Many school libraries have an unnecessarily limited view of their potential place in the school life; many actually restrict their effectiveness by misplacing or distorting their priorities. The library is a system, and works best when it is consistent, flexible, and well-planned.

The overall aim of the system is to be a centre for information, materials provision, and stimulus. There may be a number of contributing objectives:

to enable teachers and pupils to locate known items in the school stock;

to enable teachers and pupils to find information or materials on a specific subject, from the resources held by the school;

to provide the means for these materials to be studied and for many of them to be borrowed;

to give pupils the opportunity of regularly practising research skills in individual and group enquiry;

to coordinate acquisition policies for maximum economy and effectiveness.

(There are many other objectives but these will probably be the most central.)

The phrase 'school stock' was deliberate; it is hard to justify today the totally separate departmental enclaves that sometimes existed in the past. Plenty of material may be usefully kept in a particular part of the school, if it is used very regularly there; but there is absolutely no reason why its existence should not be centrally recorded, so that, say, a film-strip on the Lake District kept by the geography department can occasionally be borrowed by the English department as an introduction to the Lake poets. As a long-term objective, the school librarian should seek to include departmental holdings in the library catalogue, with a note of their location.

Organizing for retrieval

This brings us immediately to the arrangement and indexing of materials. Some teacher-librarians have found the 'new' resources so different from printed items that they have regarded them as a class apart, making an artificial distinction between books and 'resources'. But, of course, a book is a resource, and a very good one, and most of what one does already in a book library will apply equally to other types of material. It is possible to classify them by the Dewey scheme

and display them in subject order, and this has led some enthusiasts to go to the other extreme and try to shelve everything in one single, unified sequence – books, slide-sets, records, project pamphlets, work-sheets and cassettes together.

It can be done, if you are prepared to pay for the containers. Many suppliers offer strengthened filing cases, padded boxes, and book-shaped cassette holders which enable practically everything except a giant poster to be filed on a shelf next to a book. Whether it is worth spending money to do so is another matter which will depend on your educational objectives, the physical nature of your premises, and the types of pupil you are blessed with. For many people, integrated shelving is less important than an integrated catalogue, giving you in one set of filing drawers the details of every item in the collection in specific-subject order, including a note of where it is kept. If this is a classified catalogue, that is in the same order as the classification scheme, you will need to add an alphabetical index to it so that quite specific subjects can be found; the conventional guides to 'How To Find A Book' are misleading and inadequate, as can be proved by looking at them and asking yourself how you would find the location of very specific topics such as pollution.

Locating specific, known items is conventionally solved for books by means of an author index; this is a less useful concept with film-strips or a set of duplicated maps, and a simple title entry is often preferable. In all your catalogue entries, you will now have to remember to indicate the format – whether it is 35 mm slides, a 45 rpm record, or a multi-media kit. The user needs to know what equipment, if any, he will need.

This is only a mild variant of the traditional method of classifying and cataloguing books. There is fortunately no evidence that audio-visual resources as such require special, or highly complex, systems of indexing and arrangement. There are sophisticated indexing systems, using punched cards, and some schools have enjoyed using them. The Schools Council Resource Centre Project investigated them in detail, and I concluded that their advantages were not uniformly established and that they required a high level of professional expertise to accomplish. The spare-time amateur librarian is in no position to do a good job with them and is recommended to resist attempts to make him run before he and his users can walk.

Some material, incidentally, may not need to be indexed or catalogued at all. Magazine pictures, work-sheets, duplicated maps and diagrams, and ephemeral press cuttings, may quite acceptably be placed in a topic folder or box, broadly classified, and left for the intelligent teacher or pupil to find. It may be a waste of time to do more, and time is too short for most teacher-librarians.

Acquisition and production

Teachers increasingly wish to develop the pupil's ability in individual research, and try to build this up by enquiry, discovery learning, and problem-solving activities. This laudable aim needs careful initial

structuring and the use of well-prepared work-sheets and project booklets. For many schools, a 'resource centre' revolved round a reprographic unit, where a white-hot duplicator or offset litho churned out 'resources'. Such teacher-produced materials can take into account local circumstances, particular needs, and curriculum approaches. The best are worth preserving, although it may sometimes be wondered whether a work-sheet and a good collection of well-produced books and audio-visual items is preferable to a semi-legible, under-researched and rather grubby project pamphlet made in haste by a zealous but busy teacher.

However, local production is one aspect of resources acquisition as a whole, in which the teacher-librarian is naturally concerned. Teachers can only make informed decisions on whether to produce a resource if they have proper access to information about the alternatives. Thus the library resource centre should try to provide a wide range of catalogues and reviewing sources: a back file of the *School Librarian* and *Visual Education*, with their review pages, together with the Educational Foundation for Visual Aids' catalogues and lists from the local library service and any audio-visual providers.

If the teacher-librarian also coordinates all borrowings from external sources, whether of library books, films or museum items, this usefully brings together the four main aspects of a teacher's planning activities: Have we got it already? Can I borrow it? Can I buy it? Can I make it myself? A sensible decision can then be made which takes into account economic considerations as well as educational effectiveness.

Planning for use

The pupil is the main target of all these plans, although sometimes the best service we can give to the pupil is to make things a little easier for the teacher. It is important that pupils using the library or engaged on enquiry research should be able to experience reasonable success (though occasional setbacks can be educationally valuable to the well motivated). Teachers who would blush to begin a lesson without the right number of pencils and rulers will cheerfully consign a group to the library resource centre without first checking that sufficient appropriate material exists for them to use. This includes, of course, the audio-visual material which the teacher-librarian has been diligently indexing. Some of this (not all) will require equipment for its use. Provision of this need not always mean a lot of extra expense; slide and filmstrip viewers are very cheap indeed, and cassette players (rather than recorders) are not impossibly dear. Sometimes by coordinating the already existing items of audio-visual equipment in the school stock they can be made available to everyone in the school, including pupils on suitable occasions for supervised library use. This can be another benefit of organization, seeing the library resource centre as a total system designed to further the major objectives of the school.

Such use requires that the library resource centre be supervised. Some schools have achieved this by timetabling the teacher-librarian

or other teachers into the library for substantial periods of time. In times of staff shortage, this presents problems, but where the development of the library resource centre represents a decision to re-structure the school's educational approach it may still be a necessary action that enables economies to be made in other fields.

The help you will need

None of this organization can be achieved without three elements: many hands, much time, and a lot of information. Pupil-help, parental help, and help from fellow teachers can all contribute, but it must be recognized that the tasks they can undertake are limited, and take up time and energy in supervision. The problem for most teacher-librarians is that when they are available for library work they are busy with pupils and teachers needing help, advice, supervision, and sometimes lengthy attention. It is impossible under such circumstances to do work requiring concentration, or to begin tasks than cannot be completed quickly or safely left. How each individual is to get hold of time, help, and peace is beyond the scope of this article, except to commend those schools who have recognized the problem and planned for its solution by timetable adjustment and deployment of that dwindling commodity, ancillary assistance. Evening work, and more important still, work during school vacations, is an absolute necessity, and it is a tragedy that in many schools ancillary assistance is not available at this crucially valuable time. It may even be more useful than during term.

The planning and activation of libraries, including multi-media ones, is the full-time focus of a whole learned profession, the profession of librarianship, and it would be presumptuous to expect problems to be solved by a short article. In general, the teacher-librarian will be well advised to forge links with the local library service, with teachers' centres, and the appropriate members of the local authority's advisory team, as well as with other supportive services such as museums, archives, and film libraries. A local institution of teacher education, whether college or polytechnic, may well have advice and help to offer from its teaching and library staff. Some of the dozen or so schools of librarianship at polytechnics and universities offer short courses for teachers (for instance at Aberystwyth, Leeds and Newcastle), and it is worth finding out from the Library Association the addresses of such schools in your region. The Library Association and the School Library Association recently approved a new framework for a certificate in school library studies, courses for which may soon be available locally.

A fairly recent development has been the provision of courses by which people can become, in the fullest sense, dually qualified as professional teachers and chartered librarians; the Bullock Report singled out such people for special commendation and this may one day become the pattern for British school librarians as it already is in the United States and elsewhere. Teachers and careers advisers should write to the Education Officer of the Library Association for

up-to-date details of the courses available; secondment has sometimes been granted.

Finally, there is a considerable and growing amount of literature on various aspects of the school library resource centre which can be studied with profit. The bibliographies in some of the items below will lead the enquirer further into what is, for the right person, the school library resource centre adventure.

Useful addresses

The Library Association, 7 Ridgmount St, London WC1E 7AE.

The School Library Association, Victoria House, 29–31 George St, Oxford OX1 2AY.

Educational Foundation for Visual Aids in Education, 33 Queen Anne St, London W1M 0AL.

Journals for sources of suppliers of equipment

Visual Education, monthly. *The School Librarian*, quarterly. *Times Educational Supplement* 'Resources' pages; and other journals for teachers.

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Statistics in the school curriculum

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The author's experience in helping to design and operate an A-level economics syllabus and as a university teacher of statistics and economics has led him to the conclusion that a knowledge of statistical concepts and method is as essential as literary skills. But what is to be taught and by whom?

In recent issues of TRENDS, Freda Conway (TRENDS 1975/4) raised the general issue of the place of statistics in the school curriculum, and P. Holmes (TRENDS 1976/2) considered the problems of teaching statistical concepts at an early age. In so doing, he makes the important point that 'To consider statistics as a form of applied mathematics is not the whole truth . . . Statistics is the study of data in a context . . .' The distinction between the 'contextual' and 'conceptual' aspects of statistics teaching is, to my mind, of fundamental importance in attempting to answer the questions 'What is to be taught?' and 'By whom should it be taught?'

'Conceptual' and 'contextual' aspects of statistics

Conceptually, statistics provides a way of looking at things and especially of making judgements about the quality and reliability of numerical data. From this point of view, a knowledge of statistical concepts and method is as essential as literary skills. Just as the latter enable one to cope with concepts clothed in words, to form judgements on the content and reliability of ideas and their sources, and to communicate a view in sentences and paragraphs, the former provides the basis for a critical analysis of numbers. The word 'innumerate' has been coined for those who are 'illiterate in numbers'. It refers not merely to the ability to manipulate numbers and quantitative concepts (how many people are really so skilful with words?) but to the awareness of certain concepts and ways of thought and communication.

The widespread lack of numeracy (and aversion, not to say hostility, to the acquiring of quantitative techniques among 'arts' students in higher education) can possibly be attributed in part to too early and too narrow a specialization at school.

The development of social science teaching in the school curriculum in recent years has helped to focus attention on this state of affairs. Economics has historically been regarded as especially fortunate among the social sciences in permitting a high degree of quantification; and, while fashions in the teaching of the subject in universities wax and wane, it is true to say that the need for careful quantification is now widely recognized, and even the least quantita-

tive professional economist (inside or outside universities) is accustomed to using numerical data and to judging its properties and value as evidence. To teach economics in schools in such a way as to communicate accurately what economists do and how they go about their job ultimately requires contact with data. (This could also be said with perhaps equal force of all subjects within the general area of social and environmental studies as well as the natural sciences.)

When in the mid-sixties I first introduced numerical and statistical questions into A-level economics papers, I was met with a mixture of howls of protest, blank and fearful amazement, and encouraging applause from teachers. During the last decade, the natural processes of change have resulted in the majority of A-level teachers possessing serious training in economics and an appreciation of how the subject can best and most interestingly be taught. This has also coincided with a rapid rate of growth of economics as a school subject. Moreover, the 'data response' question has recently shown signs of increasing acceptance as part of the examining and teaching process at A-level.

I see the purpose of using numerical data in teaching and of teaching statistical concepts as being that of educating in the widest sense, that is to enable the pupil to comprehend the world in which he lives, to appreciate more fully how progress is made and how work is done in particular fields like economics, and thereby to become aware of the links between subjects rather than their dividing lines. As Mr Holmes suggests, there is no reason why this process should not start early on in the school career. The question at issue concerns what can most appropriately be taught, and by whom. The conceptual aspects of any subject must be essentially the responsibility of the specialist, since he is the one with the appropriate experience and training. This would appear to be especially true of statistics where, perhaps as a consequence of past teaching method, the concepts are somewhat less accessible to the non-specialist than is the case with non-quantitative subjects. On the other hand, for much the same reasons, the contextual aspects of a subject are, in the first instance at any rate, the responsibility of the specialist in the relevant context, for example the economist, the geographer, or the biologist. How can these aspects be separated?

The concept of error

If we adopt the view expressed above, that ultimately we are concerned with collecting, comprehending, manipulating, and evaluating numerical evidence, then the concept of error becomes central to the discussion. A unifying theme of all statistical work is the measurement of and reduction of uncertainty; for example, as in the measurement and forecast of magnitudes like income and the cost of living. The approach adopted in most of the formal teaching of statistics is to emphasize the concept of random sampling error and the majority of courses at whatever level are concerned to identify, to measure, and to control such errors and to evaluate variation in data on their basis. On the other hand, a good deal of statistical work

carried out in both government and industry in the social science area has been, and still is, concerned with the vital but intellectually more mundane tasks of collection and presentation in situations where random sampling does not arise. (Often where data are based on random samples, the design is so complex and time and money so short that only rudimentary estimates of sampling errors are attempted.) A fundamental preoccupation of the practical statistician is with controlling errors from other sources, namely the systematic biases. While it is true that not all random errors are necessarily sampling errors, and not all biases non-sampling errors, it seems to me that the simple model which distinguishes random errors from biases in the process of description and estimation is a useful one to adopt in this context, since it leads to a division of labour.

In so far as statistics is taught for its own sake as a branch of mathematics with the emphasis placed on the nature and development of its fundamental abstract concepts, it ideally requires to be taught by someone with a relevant background and interests. However, where statistical concepts and methods are ancillary tools required for the advancement of understanding in certain directions, it can be argued that their teaching should evolve from the contextual problems. Thus, understanding why residual errors occur in National Income accounts, why balance of payments estimates require frequent revision, and why a margin of error attaches to forecasts of the level of employment are all topics which naturally arise in the study of economics. Pupils automatically are introduced to the problems of definition, double-counting, and errors of omission and coverage. Equally, they implicitly come to face questions of distinguishing association from causation and (more explicitly) of establishing and analysing functional relationships. In my view, the classifications of these sorts of concepts, and the requirement to make them more explicit in economics teaching, at least would constitute a significant advance educationally since it would mean that the pupil is not left with a spurious idea of the precision of numerical data. Perhaps, rather more important than the exact information communicated is the approach to teaching and the view of the subject which is implied, namely developing the ideas from an enhanced awareness of real data and problems. It seems to me that this is an approach which could be started comparatively early on in a pupil's school life.*

An illustration

The Joint Matriculation Board's A-level economics syllabus has, since 1974, made specific reference to 'the application of elementary mathematical and statistical techniques' such as 'graphs'; diagrams; simple functions and equations; index numbers . . .' In addition, it seeks to examine 'The interpretation of numerical and other data'. The place of these skills and techniques is made quite explicit by their

* Wilkinson, R. K. 'An Approach to the Teaching of Economics in Schools.' In *Curriculum Development in Economics*, David Whitehead (editor). Heinemann Educational Books, 1974.

location in the syllabus under the heading, 'The tools of economic analysis'.

The inclusion of these topics was the outcome partly of a recognition of how the subject was coming to be taught in schools (i.e. through case studies and project work), as well as an indication of what the examiners saw as relevant skills to be acquired and examined. To this end, a new paper was introduced into the examination consisting of a single question 'designed to test comprehension of economics including *the interpretation of quantitative data*'. The idea of such a question is to see whether the candidate can understand the meaning of the data, identify the problems they illustrate, generally evaluate their usefulness and, of course, communicate this to the examiner.*

The statistical techniques required to deal with this sort of question or, more fundamentally, to develop the sorts of skill it is designed to test, are almost limitless; however, a realistical minimum would include an understanding of the uses of tables and diagrams, of averages and indexes, and an appreciation of the meaning and sources of error. Inevitably, it must lead to pupils being introduced to statistical sources at a relatively early stage in their courses and to a growing appreciation of the importance of statistics in the context of the problems under review as well as the importance of the main statistical sources.

Expectations

Limits are imposed on what can be expected from pupils in the way of statistical knowledge both by the development of the subject to which statistical knowledge is contributing and by the abilities and interest of teachers. As statistics becomes established earlier on in the curriculum (whether in its own right or, more likely, as part of the teaching of mathematics), expectations of what might be expected from pupils at the A-level stage may well arise. It needs to be recognized, however, that significant constraints on progress do exist and that the degree of success is likely to depend on not attempting to advance too rapidly. Moreover, there is a need for a dynamic element in the development of the curriculum to try to ensure that progress made at the early stages is not dissipated later on. This means that the teachers of these subjects like economics, who stand to benefit from pupils having gained a wider statistical knowledge, must themselves be educated into an appreciation of statistical concepts and techniques.

* Wilkinson, R. K. 'Problems of External Assessment in Economics?' In *Teaching Economics*, Norman Lee (editor). Heinemann Educational Books, 1975.

Classics in comprehensive schools

BRIAN KAY

Chief Inspector, formerly Staff Inspector with special responsibility for classics

This article summarizes some of the main findings of an HMI statistical survey of classics in comprehensive schools. A full report of the survey was published in March in the DES Matters for Discussion series.

Is classics taught in comprehensive schools? In all, or only in a small proportion? To what sort of pupils, and to how many of them? Only to the ablest, or to a wider group? If classics is taught in some but not all, what sort of schools are more likely to have classics? Does this vary in different parts of the country? What sort of classics is taught? Is it the same in content and method as the classics we remember from our own days at school? Under what conditions is it taught? This is the type of question which, some ten years after Circular 10/65 gave the first major stimulus towards comprehensive secondary reorganization, tantalizingly faced the specialist classics HM Inspectors, and to which we could give no sure answer. Of course, we knew about a very large number of individual schools and could say something of what was going on in them as far as classics was concerned. But we could not be sure how far the schools we knew were typical. In the nature of things, while working as classics specialists we tended to visit schools where we knew classics to exist. But HMI are constantly visiting schools wearing other hats than those of their subject specialism, and we knew of many comprehensive schools with no classics in the curriculum – except maybe a little masquerading as English or history in the first year or so. What we needed was to bring all this knowledge more sharply into focus.

Survey of classics

Accordingly we decided in 1973 – which seems now a very long time ago – to carry out a statistical survey of classics in comprehensive schools so that we should have more precise answers to the questions that faced us. The outcome, after a substantial amount of work and some passage of time, is the issue in the DES Matters for Discussion series of *Classics in Comprehensive Schools*, which was published in March.

A number of decisions were made. First, to restrict the survey to comprehensive schools, rather than to look at comprehensive schools in the context of secondary education generally. The grounds for this decision were the practicable scale of the exercise, in terms of HMI time involved, and the wish to cover the comprehensive field,

which was the newest and most unfamiliar one as far as classics was concerned, in as much detail as possible.

The second and consequent decision involved the definition of the 'comprehensive school', and this proved less easy than might have been expected. In the event, we used the most up-to-date DES list of comprehensive schools available (that of January 1973) and resisted the pressure from colleagues to exclude individual schools. There were some about which doubts were raised either on the grounds that they were virtually secondary modern schools or that they were virtually selective schools. In some cases this was because of the recent date of reorganization, in others because for one reason or another the schools were felt to be less than fully 'comprehensive'. But it seems probable that the deviations from the genuinely 'comprehensive' roughly balance one another across the country as a whole.

Thirdly came the decision, on which the statistics branch of the Department was consulted, about the size and nature of the sample. It seemed sensible from the beginning to carry out the survey in two stages, the first being mainly a screening exercise to determine what comprehensive schools had some form of classics, the second being a more detailed study of those schools which had classics in their curriculum. We wanted the initial sample to be large enough to give us an adequate number of schools with classics, and yet not so large a number as to make it impossible for individual visits to be paid to each school at the second stage. This involved a guess about the proportion of schools in which we should find classics, and our guess proved to be an underestimate. In the event, some 309 schools were selected on a random basis, of which 143 were subsequently visited at the second stage of the survey.

A fourth decision concerned the balance between factual information (number of pupils, length of course, examination entries, qualifications of staff, and so on) and qualitative information (methods, goals, the nature of the course, and its effectiveness). It was decided to keep the two parts separate. Visits to the schools contained in the sample provided mainly factual information which can thus be taken to give a reliable picture of classics throughout the country as a whole. Additionally, a small number of schools outside the sample was chosen for a more intensive study because it was known that a substantial amount of classics was being taught in them. As far as possible they were selected from different parts of the country, including boys', girls' and mixed schools, and serving a variety of social backgrounds. They were, as it happens, all 11–18 schools chosen primarily because they were honestly attempting to make classics work within a genuinely comprehensive set-up, and could therefore reveal the sort of problems and solutions, successes and failures, that could emerge more widely. They were not in any way representative, and the findings from this part of the survey are given separately from those of the statistical exercise. In the event, fewer schools than we had hoped were included in this category, but each was visited by two HMIs who spent two full days there.

Bulky document

The resulting document is a fairly bulky one, including a substantial number of tables of statistics which are discussed and interpreted, with chapters on the general position of classics in comprehensive schools, on its position in comprehensive schools other than the commonest 11 (12)–18 type, on the ways in which provision for classics is organized within schools, and on the sort of classics that is to be found in at any rate some comprehensive schools.

Baldly a number of facts emerge. Latin was taught in 43 per cent of the schools in the survey, and some sort of classics in 47 per cent. About half of those that taught Latin also included classics studies; only a very small proportion (4 per cent) had classical studies but no classical languages. Greek was very rare and where it existed its position was precarious.

Schools were more likely to have classics if they had an upper age limit of 18 rather than 14 or 16; if they were larger rather than smaller; if their intake of pupils was, in the view of the head, either of average or above average in ability; if at any rate one of the schools from which they had been formed by reorganization was previously a selective school. It seemed to make very little difference whether they were mixed or single sex schools, and whether they were comparatively recently reorganized or had been comprehensive for some considerable time. They were much less likely to offer classics if they were 11–14 or 11–16 schools—only 24 per cent of 11–16 schools had classics, compared with 56 per cent of 11–18 schools.

There was a remarkable variation between different parts of the country which could be accounted for in a variety of ways, including the extent to which comprehensive schools coexisted with selective schools on the one hand, and the attitude of the community as a whole to education on the other. In Wales, 76 per cent of comprehensive schools had classics, against an average for England and Wales of 47 per cent. In England, the north and the north-west were among the more favoured areas for classics, with 58 per cent and 60 per cent respectively, while the Midlands lagged far behind, with only 21 per cent.

The fact that nearly half of all comprehensive schools had classics was at first sight somewhat heartening – though it is hard lines on the children in over half the schools where no such opportunities existed. It almost certainly means that classics was being taught in 1973/4 in more schools than ever before, when one remembers that it was rare indeed to find any classics in the secondary modern schools which formed two-thirds of all schools in the early 'sixties. But it is also likely that fewer pupils were studying classics than in the 'sixties. It is certainly true that far fewer were studying Latin or Greek, as can be seen from the trends in the examination entries at ordinary and advanced level. The consequence of this is that the number of pupils studying Latin or classical studies in most comprehensive schools was small, and thus highly vulnerable to measures of economy or staff mobility. In Latin, about a half of all teaching groups in the schools covered by the survey consisted of ten pupils or

less and nearly 70 per cent of twenty pupils or less. Often classics was in the hands of one sole teacher on whose ability to attract pupils and guide them to examination successes, still an important criterion in the minds of heads and parents, the whole future of the subject in that school depended. When one observed that the conditions under which the subject was taught, in terms of time and teaching resources, were often inferior to those in the selective school, while the subject as compared with others has been shown to be one of the most severe in terms of examination assessment, the strain imposed upon the classics teacher can be seen to be considerable.

The encouraging side of the picture is the growth of classical studies, particularly in the first two years of the secondary school, as a core subject for a great proportion of the pupils in some schools; the lively development in method, content and teaching resources that this opportunity has stimulated; and the rapid spread of new approaches to the teaching of Latin within the context of an understanding of the Roman world, particularly associated with the material developed by the Cambridge School Classics Project. The closing chapter of the survey attempts some assessment of examples of both of these as seen in schools. It reveals a lively and intelligent approach on the part of some classics teachers to the solution of the many problems that undoubtedly exist for classics within the new circumstances of the comprehensive school. Finally, it gives solid grounds for confidence that classics has proved the quality of its contribution to the comprehensive school curriculum, for those who are willing to consider its claims dispassionately, and that that contribution, though different in many ways from the one it has traditionally made in the selective school, still contains much of intrinsic value which no other subject can offer to the same extent.

Trends 1977/1

The School of Oriental and African Studies as a resource centre

Teachers of Asian and African studies will find the School of Oriental and African Studies a useful teaching resource. Its Extramural Division has developed a wide-ranging educational programme which is an important part of the School's national role in developing Asian and African studies and in giving an international dimension to British education. This programme includes teacher fellowships, in-service courses and workshops, curriculum development projects, the provision of educational materials, and school conferences.

Teacher fellowships are offered in the autumn term of each session and cover such subjects as world history, geography, religious studies, development studies, and area studies. A number of individual fellowships are also offered each year for specific curriculum projects, such as one last year for a study of anthropology in schools and colleges of further education.

The Extramural Division also arranges a large number of in-service courses each year, many of which are held at the School itself either over a number of days or as a series of evening meetings. Longer courses are arranged from time to time for particular groups in cooperation with LEAs, or are held in different parts of the country in conjunction with LEAs, colleges of higher education or other university extramural or education departments. The courses, staffed by the School's two-hundred strong academic staff, teacher fellows and other serving teachers, cover a wide range of disciplines including history, art, and music as well as a consideration of teacher resources. They are usually open to secondary teachers and lecturers in colleges of further and higher education and are arranged either for teachers of a particular subject or on an interdisciplinary basis.

Conferences and lectures for sixth formers and college of education students can be arranged on request or the Division can arrange for speakers to take part in conferences arranged by other educational bodies.

Teachers' workshops are also held each year all over the country. They have concentrated in the last two years on Islam and Japan, but China and other areas are to be covered in future workshops.

The Division has always given a high priority to the development of a resources centre for teachers, covering educational materials (audio-visual equipment, books, and teaching packs) on Asia and Africa for the whole secondary age and ability range. A list of bibliographies and curriculum suggestions is available free on request. The resource handbooks (priced publications) are likely to be of particular interest to teachers. These include *Japan: A Teachers' Handbook*; *A Handbook of Resources for Teachers on Asia and Africa; World History Syllabuses;* and a *Handbook for Teachers on Islam.* Several others are in preparation. Teachers can also join the main library which is the major library on Asian and African studies in Europe.

Further information about these and other aspects of the work of the SOAS Extramural Division can be obtained from:

The Organizer of Extramural Studies
Extramural Division
School of Oriental and African Studies
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HP.
Tel: 01–637 2388

Projects commissioned under the Nursery Education Research Programme

In 1974, a management committee was set up under DES chairmanship to identify the main research needs in the nursery education field and to monitor projects commissioned as part of the £500,000 Nursery Education Research Programme announced in the 1972 White Paper, *A Framework for Expansion.*

In an article in TRENDS 1975/3, HMI Mr J. L. Kay described the early activities of the management committee and indicated the areas in which research was to be commissioned. An up-to-date list of the projects now agreed under the programme is reproduced here, which it is hoped will be of use to other researchers in this field as well as of interest to all those concerned with nursery education.

Nine projects have been commissioned:

The Experiences of Young Children at Home. Professor J. Hutt and Miss C. Davie of the Department of Psychology, Keele University, Staffordshire ST5 5BG. The four-year project began on 1 January 1975.

The aim of this project is to provide a detailed picture of the experiences to which children of nursery school age are normally exposed in the home, on the basis of an observational study of 200 children from varying social and economic backgrounds.

Developing Materials for Assessment and Evaluation. Dr R. Sumner of the National Foundation for Educational Research. The four-year project began on 1 April 1975.

Its aim is to develop materials for assessment purposes which reflect educational experience in a direct operational way.

The Aims, Role and Deployment of Staff in the Nursery. Mr M. Woodhead of the National Foundation for Educational Research. The three-year project began on 1 April 1975.

It will examine the practices of staff in a sample of nursery schools and classes, focusing on four aspects of staff behaviour: their classroom practices, their role in the classroom, the deployment of staff with different qualifications, and the differences in the attentions paid by staff to individual children.

Play, Exploration and Learning in the Pre-School Child. Professor J. Hutt and Dr C. Hutt of the Department of Psychology, Keele University.

A preliminary year of this project was supported by the Social Science Research Council. DES support began on 1 October 1975 and the project is expected to last four years.

The research programme consists of two main projects:

1. a detailed investigation of the behaviour of the pre-school child;
2. an investigation of individual differences in play and exploration, and how these affect learning and problem solving.

Fostering the Development and Use of Language by Young Children proposed by Dr J. Tough of the Institute of Education, Leeds University. The one-year project began on 1 January 1976.

The aim of the project is to examine the role of the trained nursery assistant in a nursery school or class in promoting the development of young children's use of language, and to design materials which will help such assistants to develop the quality of the experiences which they provide for young children's use of language.

The Early Education of Handicapped Children. Professor M. Chazan of the Department of Education, University College of Swansea. The two-year project began on 1 May 1976.

The project is intended to highlight the educational needs of four-year-old handicapped children in the context of their physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

Parental Involvement in Nursery Education. Dr Tizard of the Thomas Coram Research Unit. The three-year project began on 1 September 1976.

The project is to be a feasibility study of the development of a closer working partnership between nursery teachers and parents in a number of nursery schools and classes which want to involve parents more closely in the educational process.

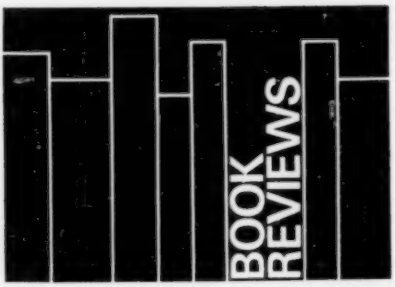
Demand for Uptake and Supply of Pre-School Education and Care Facilities. Mrs J. Haystead of the Scottish Council for Research in Education. The four-year project began on 1 October 1976.

The study will be concerned with three aspects of the relationship between the demand for and supply of pre-school facilities:

1. what mothers would like;
2. what effect increased knowledge has on mothers' demand for pre-school facilities;
3. the policies of local authority and voluntary organizations in allocating pre-school places.

Continuity of Children's Experience. Mr Yates, Mr Clift and Mr Woodhead of the National Foundation for Educational Research. The three-and-a-half-year project will begin in April 1977.

The project will examine the continuity of children's experience as they transfer from the various forms of pre-school provision to infant school.



Developments in history teaching

Ian Steele

Open Books £1·50

School history can still be a matter of learning facts about famous dead Englishmen. However, in recent years, many historians are extending their vision beyond Europe and studying the contemporary world, as well as the local and family communities. But dictated notes on Chairman Mao can bore as much as those on Mr Gladstone; a test on the Parish Church threatens enthusiasm as does one on Queen Elizabeth. However, content is now being increasingly related to skills and concepts; role playing, games and simulations, field studies, and, above all, the use of a wide variety of primary source material, is beginning profoundly to alter the subject. Not only what children know but what they do has become crucial; the historian as a detective has entered the classroom. Changes in examination syllabuses and the two important Schools Council projects concerned with history give focus and practical support to teachers seeking new ways of teaching history.

This book describes these changes clearly, realistically, and sometimes critically. Sometimes it is too sanguine – in its assessment of the contribution of the CSE for example; or too imprecise – in its assessment of a complex problem of interdisciplinary studies; or too cursory – in its treatment of a vitally important Schools Council 13–16 history project. Perhaps the most interesting section of the book is five case studies written by five teachers illustrating how the developments described in Part 1 can be given some reality. They are important reminders of the crucial contribution made by the initiative and hard work of teachers.

This is an informative and encouraging book for history teachers. It could also be read with profit by those advisers, head teachers, and parents, who have to understand, and sometimes guarantee, the place of history in the curriculum.

J. G. SLATER

Women teachers in the twentieth century in England and Wales

Geoffrey Partington

NFER £2·95

This book is, inevitably, powerful fuel to the militant feminist fires. In many ways it is a sad catalogue of the prejudice, from men and women alike, which women have experienced in the teaching profession. Indeed, one sociologist (Etzioni) is quoted as saying that any occupation with a majority of women can never be more than a 'pseudo-profession' since female employment is incompatible with the 'cultural values of professions'!

Reading this fascinating history, one is seized by the precarious nature of the present position. Was it really only twenty-one years ago that equal pay was introduced? Was it so recently that men teachers described older boys taught by women as being 'doomed to feminine supervision'? Was it only after the second world war had demonstrated the value of married women in schools that the 1944 Education Act ended the marriage bars against women teachers? It is tempting to say how far we have progressed. The author, however, makes the point that the advances in women teachers' prestige have usually resulted from a teacher shortage. The present state of teacher surplus will perhaps demonstrate how fundamental the changes have been.

Scattered throughout the book are intriguing glances at great figures; Beatrice Webb firmly refusing to exonerate Lloyd George from ill faith over equal pay: Barbara Castle riding in a horse-drawn carriage with the Equal Pay Campaign Committee's petition: Churchill refusing to insert equal pay requirements into the 1944 Act on the grounds that it 'was like placing an elephant in a perambulator'.

In the end, one is left with a weight of retrospective and amazed regret at the mountain of prejudice with which women in this century in our profession have had to contend. Coupled with this is a sense of pride to have inherited their traditions and the fruits of their courageous effort.

PAULINE PERRY

Developments in drama teaching

Lynn McGregor

Open Books £1·50

Lynn McGregor's book is one of the latest additions to the considerable corpus of books on drama and drama teaching. Its 108 pages provide an interesting summary of the 'state of play' in schools today, as she sees it, and of some of the developments that lie immediately ahead. It is certainly timely, and the shape of the book reflects the general situation in drama in education itself: there is some theoretical justification especially in order to marry the previously conflicting claims of theatre and educational drama and this is now linked with the need for getting down to brass tacks such as evaluation, the place and nature of examinations in drama and theatre arts, and, above all, for knowing what actually goes on in drama lessons. The book is therefore in three parts: present theory and practice, case studies of actual lessons and present trends and future developments. The lessons are very properly placed in the context of the school, as well as being related to the ability and experience of the pupils and the rest of the work of the drama teacher over a longer period of time.

Inevitably there are gaps. One might have hoped for a mention of drama's contribution to such current issues as language development, and for a fuller treatment of practical study of text. Nevertheless it is heartening to note that Lynn McGregor, who is leader of the Schools Council's Drama Project, 10–16, is someone who seeks to reconcile hitherto discordant elements by seeking to find a 'conceptual framework' (a philosophy?) in which everything may be harmonious.

More important, of course, will be to convince those outside the charmed drama circle that – as Lynn McGregor puts it – 'if common assumptions . . . could be found in all the different practices, a case for the subject as a distinctive educational feature could be made'. That indeed would be progress.

J. B. PARNABY

Curriculum evaluation today: trends and implications

David Tawney (editor)

Macmillan Education £4·95

This is an important collection of essays for anyone studying the recent history of curricular developments in schools in the United Kingdom. They not only provide descriptions of ways in which the evaluation of projects has been attempted but they also place this work in the context of current research and provide a generous background of references for further study. The thirty-seven projects to which reference is made span the fourteen years (1962–1976) when most of the activity has been concentrated, and many of the contributors to this volume write with some experience of curricular development. Throughout this book reference is made to the making of decisions about curricular design and there is considerable emphasis on the nature of the evidence used and on discussing the merits of the ways by which this evidence may be collected.

The contemporary context of all these evaluation studies is now much more sharply in focus for it concerns

the children in our schools – what they know, what they can do, and what kind of people they are as a result of that part of their education which schools provide. It would be very useful to have some evidence of the extent to which more than a decade of development has actually affected the performance of children at schools other than those in which the developments took place.

If this book succeeds in promoting discussion by teachers, as it certainly aims to do, then those discussions could usefully surround some of the unresolved questions raised. How do teachers arrive at decisions about changes in classroom methods and the resources needed to support their work? Who should provide the evidence on which these decisions may be based and what form should the evidence take? Who should be the partners in deciding on the curriculum for a school?

C. H. SELBY

Processes and products in science education

J. F. Eggleston, M. J. Galton, M. E. Jones

Macmillan Education £5·75

It should come as no surprise to read that the findings of this research suggest 'that there is considerable dissonance between curriculum developers' aims and the related practice within the classroom'. This statement simply emphasizes the need expressed by many people for a move away from the large, 'big bang', development project external to the schools to a greater use of a classroom-based review of the work done in schools linked with initial and in-service training. Indeed, the value of this book for the teacher and more particularly for the teacher in training lies not so much in its detailed discussion of the development of the Science Teaching Observation Schedule, although this is well worth reading, but in the first, tenative, pointers to possible links between teaching style and attainment in, and attitudes towards, science. It is deceptively simple to suggest, as the writers do (page 119), that there are three important tasks for a teacher of science, namely, to decide what to teach, then to choose the best teaching style in view of the individual children and the subject matter, and finally to design an effective form of assessment. Discussions based on this book could be a useful contribution to the general development of science teaching.

C. H. SELBY

The challenge of informal education

Moira McKenzie and Wendla Kernig

Darton, Longman and Todd £2·15

The authors state that this book is written for those already committed to informal education. Their definition of this is: 'learning and teaching activities which take place in a planned environment so arranged that each child is free to use time, space, materials and skilled adult help in order to advance in learning along the path indicated by his own interests and learning style'. The teacher's role is seen as crucial; certain competencies must be presupposed and there must be real knowledge about what and how children are learning. To this end, the chapter devoted to the teacher working in the first school is helpful and constructive. Other advice ranges from practical guidance on organizing the classroom to chapters on the specific development of mathematics and language and literacy in an informal setting. Evaluation, including record keeping, is discussed and the necessity for sound home/school relationship emphasized.

Throughout the book, the psychological concepts that underpin this way of learning are made clear with useful references to research findings. The observations of children learning in school are well chosen. One would like to see this book, addressed primarily to practising teachers, reach a wider reading public. The misuse of the term 'informal education' might then be less and the misconceptions fewer.

D. E. WISEMAN

Interaction in the classroom

S. Delamont

Methuen £3·00 (£1·40 paperback)

Educational research has given insufficient attention to the classroom and, even in America, where there has been substantially more activity, the shortcomings of social scientific approaches adopted are apparent enough. Sara Delamont emphasizes the need for greater interest in classroom interaction and observation and for more profitable ways of pursuing such activities. The case is argued lucidly both for a symbolic interactionist approach in which research by observation and immersed participation should replace objective testing, measuring, and experimenting, and for a sociological perspective in which the classroom should be seen in a situational and historical context. The argument throughout is for greater emphasis on the more dynamic classroom processes than on static structures. Many lively concepts are identified and refreshingly illustrated through transcripts of actual classroom behaviour.

It would have been helpful if there had been an elucidation of the precise nature of the methodology advocated. In view of the inevitable recourse to American research, it is rather surprising that no reference is made to protocol materials. The latter are recordings of actual classroom behaviour in which key concepts are identified for greater understanding and seem particularly relevant to any observational approach. But these details in no way detract from a brief, fresh and enthusiastic piece of writing in a relatively untapped field.

L. M. EVANS

Additional books received

ASCHER, ISAAC. China's social policy (Modern China Series No. 3). *Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, £0·60.*

BROWN, ROY I. Psychology and the education of slow learners. *Routledge & Kegan Paul, £2·95.*

CLARKE, ANN M., and A. D. B. CLARKE. Early experience: myth and evidence. *Open Books, £3·95.*

DUCKWORTH, DEREK, and ROLAND HOSTE. Question banking: an approach through biology. Schools Council Examination Bulletin 35. *Evans/Methuen Educational, £2·30.*

GRETTON, JOHN, and MARK JACKSON. William Tyndale. *Allen & Unwin, £1·50.*

HARPIN, WILLIAM. The second R. *Allen & Unwin, £4·50 (£1·95 paperback).*

HILL, DAVID. Teaching in multiracial schools. *Methuen, £3·50 (£1·60 paperback).*

KEETON, MORRIS T., and associates. Experimental learning: rationale, characteristics and assessment. *Jossey-Bass, £9·60.*

SCHOOLS COUNCIL. Schools Council report 1975–1976. *Evans/Methuen Educational, £1·50.*

STUKAT, KARL-GUSTAV. Current trends in European pre-school research. *NFER, £2·60.*

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